

SECTION A.  
TECHNICAL NOTES



# SCOPE OF SURVEY

Data presented in this report are collected annually through the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) congressionally mandated Survey of Federal Science and Engineering (S&E) Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions (the Federal S&E support survey). The survey originated in 1965, when the Committee on Academic Science and Engineering (CASE) within the Federal Council for Science and Technology established the CASE data collection system to report annually on Federal S&E obligations to academic institutions and associated federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs). Since 1968, CASE data, as well as data on nonprofit institutions, also have served as the basis for an annual report to the President and Congress. This survey is designed to collect information from Federal agencies on (1) total S&E program support to academic institutions, and (2) research and development (R&D) and R&D plant support to nonprofit institutions. A Web-based data collection system (FSSWeb) is used to collect the Federal S&E Support survey data. The FSSWeb system is part of NSF's effort to enhance survey reporting and reduce data collection and processing costs by offering respondents direct online reporting and editing. See the Federal S&E Support's Survey Methodology report for further details on the FSSWeb system.

The data are presented in terms of Federal obligations provided for direct support of academic S&E. The data exclude financial support of an indirect nature, such as funds allocated to state agencies, even if the final recipient of such funds is known to be an academic institution. Data on type of institutional control and on highest degree granted are not presented in this report but are available upon request (see "Data Availability" at the end of this section).

Obligations are the amounts for orders placed, contracts awarded, services received, and similar transactions during a given period, regardless of when the funds were appropriated and when future payment of money is required. Obligations differ from expenditures in that funds allocated by Federal agencies during one fiscal year may be spent by the recipient institution either partially or entirely during one or more subsequent years.

The obligations listed for individual institutions reflect direct Federal S&E support. Thus, amounts subcontracted and subgranted to other institutions are included, but funds received through subrecipient arrangements from prime recipients are excluded.

Obligations are reported to the survey in thousands of dollars. Obligations totaling less than \$500 for any specific activity (e.g., R&D, general support for S&E) are reported as zero.

Obligations are listed as awards to individual institutions within a system (e.g., to the University of California, Los Angeles rather than to the University of California system as a whole). However, obligations awarded directly to the central administration of a system are listed separately. If the final destination of the funds is not known, the agencies report them as obligations to a system's administrative office from which the funds are distributed to the system's individual institutions.

## CHANGES IN REPORTING

Since these data were first collected in 1965, there have been some changes in reporting. The most recent of these include the following:

1. Beginning in FY 2000, NASA reclassified space station as a physical asset and space station research as equipment and transferred funding for the program from "R&D" to "R&D plant." According to NASA, this classification change had a negligible impact on the data reported in this report for FY 2000. However, this classification change was reflected in the FY 2001 academic totals, which showed an R&D plant increase for NASA nearly five times over the FY 2000 R&D plant total (see table B-2).
2. Beginning with the FY 1999 survey cycle, the NSF determined that Federal agencies would no longer report obligations to academic or nonprofit FFRDCs. Obligations to FFRDCs were deleted from all previous years shown in this report.
3. Beginning with the FY 1996 survey cycle, the NSF determined that Federal agencies would no longer report obligations for fields of S&E.
4. Since FY 1994, NSF has collected data on DoD development dollars in two categories: advanced technology development and major systems development. These categories better differentiate between that part of the Federal R&D budget that supports "science and key enabling technologies" (including for military and nondefense applications) and that part that

primarily concerns “testing and evaluation of large technical systems prior to production” (of mostly defense-related systems).

5. Before FY 1993, NSF published data on a seventh obligations category (see “Categories of Support,” below) covering non-S&E activity. At that time, however, the Department of Education made major software modifications to the automated system from which its Federal S&E data were produced. The revamped coding structure introduced major trend differences for the department’s institution data. Consequently, because Education accounted for 91 percent (\$5.9 billion) of the total Federal support for “non-S&E” (\$6.5 billion) for FY 1993, NSF no longer publishes non-S&E totals. To explain Education’s downward academic R&D trend between FYs 1993 and 1994 (from \$95 million to \$49 million), the agency stated that academic R&D programs in FY 1994 either were not funded, did not have an S&E component, or received reductions in funding.
6. During the FY 1987 survey cycle, the Department of Defense (DoD) determined that some funds reported in prior years as R&D obligations to the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab (APL) were more appropriately classified as “other sciences and engineering.” Data for FYs 1984–86 were revised, but DoD was unable to revise data for earlier years. In FY 2001, APL accounted for more than 95 percent of DoD’s total S&E funding of \$341 million to Johns Hopkins.

## CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT

The data presented here include all obligations for academic S&E, comprising Federal obligations for R&D; R&D plant; facilities and equipment for S&E instruction; fellowships, traineeships, and training grants; general support for S&E; and other S&E activities. These support categories are defined below.

1. Research and development includes all direct, indirect, incidental, or related costs resulting from or necessary to performing R&D by private individuals and organizations under grant, contract, or cooperative agreement. Demonstration projects designed to test or prove whether a technology or method is, in fact, workable are considered to be within the scope of R&D if they are designed to produce new information and are accomplished within a given time period.
2. R&D plant includes all projects whose principal purpose is to provide support for construction, acquisition, renovation, modification, repair, or rental of facilities, land, works, or fixed equipment for use in scientific or engineering research and development. A facility is to be interpreted broadly to include any physical resource important to the conduct of research or development. All costs—direct, indirect, and related expenditures—are to be included.

The following activities are excluded from R&D but should be reported under one or more of the other five S&E categories:

- Routine product testing
- Quality control
- Topographical mapping and surveys
- Collection of general-purpose statistics
- Experimental production
- Demonstrations designed to exhibit new technologies or methods or to disseminate information thereon
- Scientific and technical information activities
- R&D facilities and fixed equipment

Research is systematic study directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied. Research is classified as either basic or applied according to the objectives of the sponsoring agency. In basic research, the objective of the sponsoring agency is to generate knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications toward processes or products in mind. In applied research, the objective of the sponsoring agency is the creation of knowledge or understanding necessary to determine the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met.

Development is systematic use of knowledge and understanding gained from research directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including design and development of prototypes and processes.

Research equipment is any item (or interrelated collection of items comprising a system) of nonexpendable tangible property or software having a useful life of more than 2 years and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more that is used wholly or in part for research. Research equipment is included under R&D.

If the R&D facilities are part of a larger facility devoted to other purposes as well, the funds should be distributed among the categories of support involved as appropriate. In general, another category that would be involved is category 3 (facilities and equipment for instruction in science and engineering).

Exclude from the R&D plant category expendable research equipment and office furniture and equipment, and all other activities, i.e., those not specifically related to science and engineering. See definition of “research equipment” under “research and development” category.

3. Facilities and equipment for instruction in S&E include all programs whose principal purpose is to provide support for construction, acquisition, renovation, modification, repair, or rental of facilities, land, works, or equipment for use in instruction in S&E.

If the instructional facilities are part of a larger facility devoted to other purposes as well, the funds should be distributed among the categories of support involved as appropriate. In general, the other category most likely to be involved is category 2 (R&D plant).

4. Fellowships, traineeships, and training grants include all fellowship, traineeship, and training grant programs that are directed primarily toward the development and maintenance of scientific and technical manpower. The total amounts pertaining to such awards (stipends and cost-of-education allowances) are reported in terms of the institution at which the recipient performs research and/or study.

Excluded are projects that support research and educational institutes, seminars, and conferences such as teacher training activities provided through teacher institutes, short courses, research participation, and in-service seminars; activities aimed at the development of educational techniques and materials for use in S&E training; and programs that provide special opportunities for increasing the scientific knowledge and experience of precollege and undergraduate students. These activities are to be reported either under category 6 (other activities related to S&E) or not reported if they are not S&E-related.

5. General support for S&E includes activities that provide support for nonspecific or generalized purposes related to scientific research and education. Such projects are generally oriented toward academic

departments, institutes, or institutions as a whole. “General support” implies a spectrum of varying types of support. At one extreme is support provided without any specification of purpose other than that funds be used for scientific activities. Another kind of “general support” is to be found in projects that provide funds for activity within a specified field of S&E but without specifying explicit purpose. The distinguishing feature of “general support for S&E” projects is that they permit a significant measure of freedom as to purpose (research, faculty support, education, institutional support, etc.).

It is intended that among the projects to be reported under the category “general support for S&E” are projects awarded through these agency programs:

- NIH Minority Biomedical Research Support for Undergraduate Colleges
- NIH Minority Biomedical Support Grants

6. Other S&E activities include all academic S&E activities that cannot meaningfully be assigned to one of the five categories previously set forth. Among the types of activities to be included in this category are support for scientific conferences and symposia, teacher institutes, and activities aimed at increasing the scientific knowledge of precollege and undergraduate students.

## TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

The types of institutions covered by this survey are universities and colleges, independent nonprofit institutions, and consortia of both universities and colleges and of independent nonprofit institutions.

## UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Universities and colleges are those institutions of higher education in the United States that offer at least 1 year of college-level study leading toward a degree. The universe of academic institutions for this survey is derived from the higher education institution portion of the Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics) and the 2002 Higher Education Directory (published by Higher Education Publications, Inc.).

Institutions included are those that received Federal S&E support during FY 2001. This support may have been provided to any part of the academic institution—

its colleges (e.g., liberal arts) and schools (e.g., agriculture), professional schools, hospitals, agricultural experiment stations, bureaus, offices, and research centers (excluding FFRDCs), whether located on or off the main campus or at branch campuses controlled directly by the parent institution. Further, the institutions included must have a significant degree of academic and administrative autonomy. For example, institutions within a system (a group of institutions having a collective legal status and generally recognized by a State government, a board of education, or other relevant organization) in which a significant degree of autonomy remains at the individual institution level are presented separately; however, obligations to branch campuses are included in the totals for the parent institutions. Obligations to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School are not included.

## INDEPENDENT NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Independent nonprofit institutions are legal entities other than universities and colleges, privately organized or chartered to serve the public interest, and exempt from most forms of Federal taxation. Data presented for nonprofit institutions are obligations for R&D and R&D plant reported by as many as 19 participating agencies.

Coverage of the nonprofit sector in the Federal S&E support survey was expanded beginning in the late 1970s to include all types of nonprofit institutions that receive Federal R&D funds. For NSF's purposes, these types of institutions are defined as follows:

1. Research institute: A separately incorporated, independent nonprofit organization operating under the direction of its own controlling body whose primary function is the performance of R&D in S&E.
2. Voluntary hospital: This is a member of the American Hospital Association not subject to the control of either Federal, state, or local governments nor an integral part of any institution of higher education. Note that hospitals that have been set up by research institutes and that, although providing patient care, function primarily as laboratories for research institutes are themselves classified as research institutes.
3. All other independent nonprofit institutions:
  - Professional or technical society or academy of science and engineering: A voluntary association of individuals sharing a common interest in the advancement of knowledge—either within a single field or across a broad spectrum of disci-

plines—whose major function is to aid and encourage the collection, collation, and dissemination of S&E knowledge for the benefit of their members and the community as a whole.

- Private foundation: A nongovernmental nonprofit organization, with a principal fund of its own managed by its own trustees or directors, established to maintain, aid, or facilitate social, educational, charitable, religious, or other activities serving the common welfare. Private foundations include operating foundations that allocate the greater proportion of their R&D budgets to intramural performance and philanthropic foundations that allocate most of their funds to grants and contracts for research to be performed extramurally.
- Science exhibitor: A nonprofit organization whose primary goal is to expand scientific literacy within a community by providing exhibits that display and interpret the latest scientific findings within its field or fields. Included in this category are museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and arboretums.
- Trade association: An organization of business competitors in a specific industry or business that is interested primarily in the commercial promotion of products or services. Membership is usually held in the name of a business entity. Activities may fall into one or more of the following areas: business ethics, management practices, standardization, commercial (statistical) research, publication, promotion, and public relations.
- Agricultural cooperative: An organization of individuals or business entities that are normally competitors in the production and sale of agricultural products. Activities may fall into one or more of the following areas: collective marketing or purchasing, research, public relations, and improvement of economic conditions for the U.S. farm population.

## CONSORTIA

Consortia are organizations formed by the membership of a number of institutions from one or more types of performers (academic, nonprofit, industrial, etc.) in order to promote and support efforts to enhance knowledge in one or more science or engineering disciplines. NSF has identified several consortia and has classified



them as either academic or nonprofit types based on the predominance of their membership at the time of identification.

## DATA COMPARABILITY WITH OTHER SRS STUDIES

### FEDERAL FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Data presented here on R&D and R&D plant by agency sometimes differ significantly from similar data presented in the annual NSF survey, Federal Funds for Research and Development (or the “Federal funds survey”). Much of the difference lies in the two surveys’ treatment of interagency transfers. Interagency transfers of funds obligated to an academic or nonprofit institution are reported here by the agency that actually obligates the funds to the receiving institution. In the Federal funds survey, however, obligations are reported by the agency in which the funds originated.

Other differences between the data compiled by the two surveys stem from the following factors:

- Agencies involved: In the present survey, data are reported by as many as 19 Federal agencies on their S&E obligations to institutions of higher education; these agencies together obligate virtually all Federal support to academic R&D. For the Federal funds survey, budget data on R&D and R&D plant are gathered from the 29 Federal agencies with such programs.
- Scope of information: Data collected in the Federal S&E support survey pertain only to individual academic and nonprofit institutions. Those collected in the Federal funds survey relate to all types of performers. Furthermore, the Federal funds survey provides detailed data on the character of work (basic research, applied research, and development); data from the Federal S&E support survey are not comparably disaggregated.
- Data sources: The two surveys rely on different sources of data and on different methods of data collection. For example, data for the Federal S&E support survey are generally processed from award files; Federal funds survey data are usually derived from agency budget documents.
- Preparer interpretations: Several agencies rely on personnel from separate internal offices to respond to the two surveys. These respondents may differ in their interpretation of survey questions. The National Institutes of Health, for example, report Minority Biomedical Support Grants under “general support for science and engineering” in the Federal S&E support survey, but under “research and development” in the Federal funds survey.

### NATIONAL PATTERNS OF R&D RESOURCES

NSF publishes one other report related to Federal R&D funding, *National Patterns of R&D Resources*. This report provides statistics on U.S. R&D expenditures categorized by provider of funds (Federal Government, non-Federal government, industry, academia, and nonprofit institutions), type of performer (Federal Government, industry, academia, nonprofit institutions, and federally funded research and development centers), and character of work (basic research, applied research, and development). In the report, R&D expenditure levels from Federal sources are based on performer-reported surveys, which differ from Federal R&D funding totals reported by the Federal agencies that provide those funds. During the past several years, these differences have widened. The difference in the Federal R&D totals appears to be concentrated in the funding of industry R&D by the Department of Defense. See *National Patterns of R&D Resources: 2002 Data Update* (NSF 03-313) for detailed discussion and documentation of these differences.

## DATA AVAILABILITY

### FEDERAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SUPPORT TO UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Data published in this report are also available on the World Wide Web. Information on file formats and the years for which they are available can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/fedsuppt/start.htm>.

### INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES

Selected data items for individual doctorate-granting institutions and schools with S&E departments that grant a master’s degree are available on institutional profiles at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/profiles/toc.htm>. An institutional profile consists of data not only from this

survey but from NSF's other two academic S&E surveys: the Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges and the Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering.

## WebCASPAR

Institutional researchers can obtain data from several academic S&E resources through the Web-based WebCASPAR database system, which provides quick and convenient access to a wide range of statistical data focusing on U.S. universities and colleges and their S&E resources.

WebCASPAR provides an extensive and growing data library with multiyear statistics on the state of higher education in general and on academic S&E resources specifically. This data library is based on a set of standard institutional and field-of-science definitions across the multiple sources used to develop the database. The

WebCASPAR program includes built-in help capabilities to facilitate the use and interpretation of the data.

WebCASPAR data are drawn from a number of sources. All data are available for individual institutions, by State, and at the national level. Longitudinal data from surveys of universities and colleges conducted by NSF's Division of Science Resources Statistics include the Federal S&E support survey, academic R&D expenditures survey, Federal funds survey, and graduate student survey cited above. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics are also included. Data from other sources include the National Research Council's assessment of research doctorate programs.

WebCASPAR can be accessed via the World Wide Web at <http://caspar.nsf.gov/webcaspar>.